

From "A Comparative Dictionary of the Pwo Karen Dialect"  
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### GRAMMATICAL INTRODUCTION.

[The sections of this introduction correspond with those of Dr. Gilmore's Grammar of Sgaw-Karen. In a large number of cases Dr. Gilmore's actual phraseology is retained and it is hoped that the practical advantage which accrue from this arrangement may mitigate the charge of plagiarism.]

1. The Pwo dialect of Karen is spoken by people who call themselves Sho ရှိ or Hplon Mu-hteik မိုးမိထံ. Sgaw Karens are called by Pwos, Shan ရှဲ or Hplon Hpa-hteik မိုးဖါထံ. The alternative titles mean respectively Karens of the mother and father stems. In Karen sex-couplets, the female element is always given precedence which way perhaps be a vestige of matriarchy. The inference in this present case is that Pwo, being the mother-stem, is the senior of the two chief Karen dialects.

The Pwo dialect is split up into two chief sub-dialects which are called by the people themselves ပုဒုံ and ဘဲကျဲ. These dialects are sufficiently diverse in pronunciation and vocabulary to make Karens who only know one resort to Burmese when they wish to converse together. The ပုဒုံ sub-dialect is regarded as the senior and it is the pronunciation and vocabulary of this sub-dialect which is preserved in the printed books. The ပုဒုံ live for the most part in Tenasserim Division and the ဘဲကျဲ in the Delta of the Irrawaddy. The two dialects are referred to in this work as Tenasserim Pwo (T.P.) and Delta Pwo (D.P.)

2. The Pwos have an abundant store of traditions consisting of folk-lore and legends strongly tinged with Buddhism. They have proved much more susceptible to Burmese influence than their Sgaw brethren and their folk-lore shows traces of this influence. Attempts have been made from time to time to reduce these legends to writing and to give them the appearance of incunabula by the use of palm-leaved pages and unfamiliar characters. The Talaing alphabet has been used for this purpose but has never had any vogue. Dr. Mason has

preserved one of these legends in his "Synopsis of a Grammar of the Karen Language."

3. The same erudite, if somewhat wayward, scholar was the pioneer of the modern Pwo Karen script. Dr. Mason used English and Greek characters to make up the defects of Burmese but the result was not very satisfactory, as may be gathered from the fact that it was called by the Karens လံဆာ့ပုလ "the scratchings of fowls!" Dr. Mason's system was simplified by Dr. Brayton and it is this system which is now exclusively used in the printing of Pwo books. In the present work the spelling is that of T.P; but where pronunciation is indicated it is usually that of D.P.

#### 4. The Alphabet.

The letters of the alphabet are derived from the Burmese characters with certain modifications; there are twenty-five consonant and eleven vowel signs.

#### 5. Consonants: --

က, ခ, ဂ, ဃ, င,

စ, ဇ, ဆ, ရှ,

တ, ထ, ဒ, န,

ပ, ဖ, ဘ, မ,

ယ, ရ, လ, ဝ,

၁, ဟ, ဇ, ပှ,

#### 6. Pronunciation.

With the exception of the following, the consonants are pronounced as in Burmese: --

ဂ is the uvular R the Northumbrian burr. ဃ is the above preceded by the velar fricative Ch heard in Scotch loch. When ဃ is combined with ဝ the ဂ sound is dropped and only Ch is heard.

ရ is the trilled R

၁ is the Burmese ဝ

ဇ is voiced H

ပှ is pronounced by D.P. as ဝ

**7. Combination of consonants.**

ယ, ရ, လ, ဝ, may be combined with other consonants as follows: --

က့ / က / ယ / kya

ကြ / က / ရ / kra

ကျ / က / လ / kla

ကွ / က / ဝ / kwa

**8. The eleven vowel signs are: --**

အ, အါ, အံ, အ့, အဲ, အၢ

အံ့, အု, အူ, အိ, အီ

9. အ is the indeterminate vowel as a in above

အါ back open vowel as a in father

အံ front close vowel as ea in eat

အ့ front middle vowel as a in late

အဲ diphthong ai as in aisle

အၢ mixed half-open vowel as i in bird

အံ့ spread close vowel

အု round, close, front vowel as u French du

အူ close, back vowel as oo in pool

အိ half-close, back vowel

အီ diphthong a u as ow in how

10. Nasalisation of the vowels is indicated by the sign [◌:] which in combination with a tone-sign is reduced to one dot below the tone-sign: e.g., ြံ့, ြု့, ြု

11. အိ is scarcely distinguishable from အူ e.g., အမိ is pronounced amu and ပုဒိ padu.

12. The value of အ့ in certain combination is so near to အံ that the foreign ear finds it difficult to detect the difference.

13. The sound အံ့ lies between အၢ and အု and is known by the phonetic sign uu@. When in combination with ြံ it is not distinguishable from အု e.g. အံ့ံ & အုံ are pronounced alike.

#### 14. Tones.

Tones are certain modifications of the sound values of the words of isolating languages corresponding to the inflections of agglutinative languages. These modifications are of a composite character and may affect at one and the same time the pitch, duration and modulation of the sounds. A tone may therefore be described as to its pitch, whether high or low; its duration, whether long or short; and its modulation, whether rising, level or falling.

Six different tones are indicated in Pwo Karen script but as the language is pronounced by D.P. there are now only four tones. The terms used by the Karens to differentiate the various tones, indicate the nature of the sign used to denote them and provide no clue as to their pronunciation. It is better to use a nomenclature which refers to the sound rather than to the sign; and so, in the schedule below, the tones are designated by terms which refer to their most conspicuous sound characteristics.

#### 15. i. The high tone.

This is the tone implied when no tone-sign is used:  
high pitch, short duration, rising modulation

#### ii. The middle tone ၀း

middle pitch, long duration, level modulation

#### iii. The low tone ၀၂ or ၀၁

low pitch, short duration, falling modulation.

#### iv. The checked tone ၀၃ or ၀၄

high pitch, short duration, modulation cut out by glottal check.

N.B. The indeterminate vowel, although it is not followed by a tone-sign, is a variation of the middle tone but with shorter duration.

16. When the tone-signs follow ၀၁ the ၀၁ is omitted and understood; this is the case also when ၀၁ is followed by the sign [း] indicating nasalisation. e.g. ၀၁း is written ၀း.

#### 17. Sound-shiftings between Pwo and Sgaw.

The Pwo and Sgaw dialects are very closely allied and in a large number of cases the vocabulary is identical except for slight modifications. These modifications of vowel, consonant and tone obey certain laws which may be compared with those which govern the Aryan languages as expressed in Grimm's law.

18. The following general principles may be laid down with regard to the relationship existing between cognate Pwo and Sgaw words:

(a) Pwo has aspirated where Sgaw has the corresponding unaspirated consonants: --

Pwo ခါ break / Sgaw ကါ

Pwo ထီး bridge / Sgaw တီး

Pwo ဖျါ arrow / Sgaw ပျါ

(b) Breathed consonants in Pwo are replaced by the corresponding voiced consonants in Sgaw: --

Pwo ထဲ branch / Sgaw ဒဲ

Pwo ဖျှာ smooth / Sgaw ဘျှာ

(c) Occasionally the reverse is the case: --

Pwo ဒါ see / Sgaw ထံ

(d) The formative affix is often omitted in Pwo: --

Pwo နာ bee / Sgaw ကနဲ

Pwo မုနဲ maiden / Sgaw မုန်ကန်

Pwo ခိ mango / Sgaw သခိ

(e) Pwo ယ corresponds with Sgaw ည : --

Pwo ယာ before / Sgaw ညါ

Pwo ယီ easy / Sgaw ညီ

Pwo ယာသာ mercy / Sgaw သးကညီ

(f) Pwo ရှ or ဖ corresponds with Sgaw ပှ, ဖှ, ဖှ, ဆှ : --

Pwo ရှါ old / Sgaw ပှါ

Pwo ပှဲ buy / Sgaw ပှဲ

Pwo ပှံ sow / Sgaw ဖှံ

Pwo ရှဲ few / Sgaw ဖှဲ

Pwo ပှံ clean / Sgaw ဆှံ

(g) Pwo nasalised ိ corresponds with Sgaw အိ : --

Pwo ခု foot / Sgaw ခိန်

(h) Other nasal vowels in Pwo are represented in Sgaw by the corresponding pure vowels: --

Pwo ဗာ heavy / Sgaw ဃာ

(i) The middle, low and checked tones are usually consonant: --

Pwo မု rice / Sgaw မု

Pwo ယ fish / Sgaw ညှိန်

Pwo ဘ itch / Sgaw သး

(j) The high tone in Pwo sometimes corresponds with the low tone in Sgaw: --

Pwo ယါ sail / Sgaw ယာ်

(k) The low tone in Pwo sometimes corresponds with the high tone in Sgaw: --

Pwo မာ wife / Sgaw မါ

19. Pronunciation is the same as in English.

20. Figures are the same as in Burmese.

### The Structure of the Sentence.

21. The order of words in Karen may be illustrated by the following simple sentence: စဘွဲးပုဂံလီာ. S' Bwa builds a house, စဘွဲး S' Bwa, subject;

ပု builds, predicate, ပံ house, object; လီာ a particle used to mark the close of a declarative sentence.

A Karen sentence, therefore, resembles an English sentence in two particulars.

(1) The order of words is: subject, predicate, object.

(2) The subject and object are recognized by their position in the sentence.

22. Modifiers may be added to the above sentence as follows: လဘျဲးဘျဲး စဘွဲး ဘရဲါနီာ ပုထံ ပံ ချဲးချဲးလီာ. sometimes, old S' Bwa builds a house



quickly, လဘျးဘျး sometimes, adverbial modifier; ဘၣ် old, adjective modifying စဘွး; နီၣ် demonstrative modifying စဘွး; ချဲချဲ quickly, adverb modifying ညံ့ထံ့.

In a Karen sentence, therefore: --

- (1) An adjective modifier follows the noun which it modifies.
- (2) An adverbial modifier stands after the verb and its object, if it have one; but,
- (3) An adverbial modifier denoting time may stand at the beginning of the sentence.

### Parts of Speech.

23. The Karen language has the nine following parts of speech; nouns, pronouns, adjectives, verbs, adverbs, prepositions, conjunctions, interjections and particles.

24. But it must be understood that the distinction between the different parts of speech is by no means so sharply defined in Karen as in English. The same word will appear now as this, and now as that part of speech, according to the office it performs in its sentence. Thus in the phrase ဂံ့အံ့, a big house, ခိ appears as an adjective; in ဂံ့ခိတုာ, the house is big, ခိ appears as a verb; in ဂံ့အဆၢခိ, the bigness of the house, ခိ forms a noun.

25. Among the most striking peculiarities of the Karen language are its paired words, or couplets. Sometimes two words of analogous signification are united to form a word of slightly different meaning from either; sometimes the couplet consists of two synonymous words; sometimes it consists of a significant root which, out of the couplet, has no meaning. Couplets are found among nouns, adjectives, verbs and adverbs.

26-27. A proper noun is usually preceded by the name of the class to which the individual belongs; ခးဒီးဂိး Burma, (ခး meaning country;) ဝံးတခိး Rangoon (ဝံး meaning city.) Names of men are preceded by the particle စ; e.g. စရွာယီၣ် S' Shwe Young. Names of women are preceded by the article နး e.g. နးအိၣ်ဖြူ Nan Aung Pyu.

28-30. Common nouns may be derived from: --

- (1) Verbal roots.
- (2) Adjective roots.
- (3) Other noun roots.

31. Nouns are formed from verbal roots in the following ways: --

(1) Abstract nouns of action are formed: --

(a) By prefixing the particle ဆာ to the verbal root;

e.g. from the root လာ, to go, is formed the noun ဆာလာ going, journey.

(b) By simply using the verbal root as a noun, qualifying it by a demonstrative adjective;

e.g. နှစ်ဆာနီယာနာ့အာ. I don't understand what you say.

(2) Nouns of agency are formed by prefixing ပု person, to the verb, and at the same time affixing မိ; e.g. ပုလာဆာမိ a traveller, sometimes the affix မိ is omitted.

(3) Instrumental nouns are formed by prefixing နီ to the verbal root; e.g. ဝါ, to shake, နီဝါ a pudding stick.

(4) Nouns denoting where an action takes place are formed by prefixing လး, place, to the verbal root; e.g. မာ, to sleep; လးမာ, a bed.

32. Abstract nouns of quality are formed by prefixing to the adjectival root the particle ဆာ; e.g. ဒီ, great; ဆာဒီ, greatness.

33. Nouns are formed from other noun roots in the following ways: --

(1) Diminutives are formed by adding မိ, young, little, to the noun root; e.g. ထုံ a dog; ထုံမိ, a little dog, a puppy.

(2) Gentile nouns, and all nouns expressing residence, are formed by affixing မိ to the name of the place, e.g. ဝံး, city; ဝံးမိ, citizens. The particle ပု is generally prefixed as well. e.g. ဒီးဂိ, Burma, ပုဒီးဂိမိ Burmans.

(3) Two or more noun roots may be combined; e.g. ထာချိလ် river, ဆုလုးမိ knee.



34. Noun couplets are formed by the combination of two noun roots, each of which is generally followed or preceded by a particle, which serves to connect them: e.g. ထိပ်သီးလိပ်သီး, or ထိပ်သီးလိပ်သီး, birds, ဆေးခန်းဆေးတား, grace, ဆေးဂုဏ်ဆေးဘွား, goodness, ပထမိယ: my country, နှစ်ဖက်လုံး your descendents, အကိုအဟဲ့, his buildings. In the last three examples the connecting particle is a personal pronoun in the possessive case.

Gender.

35-38. The Karen language recognizes only natural gender.

39. The gender of indeterminate nouns may be distinguished by the following affixes: ပုခွာ or ခွာ masculine, applied to human beings.

ပုမု or မု feminine, applied to human beings.

မာ masculine, applied to animals.

မိ feminine, applied to animals.

e.g. မိသ child, မိသအခွာ boy, မိသအမု girl,

ကသု horse, ကသုမာ stallion, ကသုမိ mare.

Number.

40. Karen nouns convey of themselves no idea of number; e.g. the noun ဂံ့ may mean house or houses. The number is often left to be inferred from the context. When, however, it is desired definitely to mark the number, this can be done.

41. The singular is denoted by the numeral, က or လ; e.g. ဂံ့ကတို့, ဂံ့လတို့.

42. The plural may be noted in the following ways: --

(1) By the use of a numeral adjective;

e.g. ဂံ့နှာတို့ two houses, ဂံ့အများ many houses.

(2) By any one of the following affixes လမ, the usual affix;

e.g. ဂံ့လမ houses. သံ used with the vocative, or with pronouns;

e.g. ထာရုဖဝဲသံ, brethren.

အဝါသံ they

သံလမ used principally with pronouns; e.g. အဝါသံလမ they.

(3) The plural, when used to convey the idea of generality is often expressed by a couplet; e.g. ဂံ့သံစာသံ, houses or buildings in general.

43-44. With regard to case, the "absolute case" alone calls for remark as being peculiar to Karen. Its function is to name prominently at the beginning of the sentence, and thus to emphasize the person or thing about which some statement is made in the remainder of the sentence ကံ့ကတဖျိနီယ ယဗ္ဗုယု. I have bought that house.

45. In Karen, as in English, the case of the noun is indicated, not by inflection, but by the position of the word in the sentence. Where this is not sufficient, recourse is had to particles.

46. Regularly, the subject precedes the verb, and the object follows it; e.g. စဘွေသုဂံလီ, S' Bwa builds a house, စဘွေ the subject, precedes the verb, သု; and ဂံ the object, follows it.

47. Karen nouns, like English nouns, are often governed by prepositions; e.g. ယလုစီးလာဝံးတခိ I am going to Rangoon. Here ဝံးတခိ is governed by the preposition စီးလာ. Nouns follow the preposition by which they are governed.

(N.B. စီး is often omitted e.g. ယလုလာဝံးတခိ.)

48. Where in English a verb has two objects, or one direct and one indirect object, the Karen may place either one as the direct object of the verb, and the other will then be governed by the preposition လာ; e.g. where the English says, I give S' Bwa a book, the Karen may say, ယ ဖှ စဘွေ လာလံလဘံ or ယ ဖှ လံလဘံ လာစဘွေလီ.

49. In Karen, verbal nouns as well as verbs may take objects; e.g. ဆာအဲနာ love (for) you.

50. A noun in the possessive construction is joined to the name of the thing possessed by the particle အ; e.g. စဘွေအဂံ S' Bwa's house.

51. A noun in the vocative case is followed by the particle ဇ, e.g. စဘွေဇ S' Bwa.

(N.B. D.P. pronounce ဇ, as လဲ.)

52. Substantives in the absolute construction stand first in the sentence, free of all grammatical relation thereto, and are usually

followed by the demonstrative adjective, *ယီး* or *နီး*; e.g. *ဂံ့အဝှာနီး စဘွဲ ခုထုဝှာလီ၊ that house, S' Bwa built it.* Here *ဂံ့* is in the absolute construction, followed by *နီး*, *that*. Occasionally the particle *ဘီး* takes the place of the particle *ယီး* or *နီး*; more commonly it follows one of them, e.g. *ဂံ့အဝှာနီးဘီး, စဘွဲ ခုထုဝှာလီ*.

#### Pronouns.

53. Karen Pronouns are principally Personal, though Interrogative and Indefinite Pronouns exist.

54. There are no Relative Pronouns in Karen. Relative clauses are common; but they are connected with the nouns which they modify by means of the conjunction *လၢ*, the pronouns used being personal pronouns of the third person.

#### Personal pronouns.

55. In Karen, as in English, the personal pronouns are declined, the cases being marked by case forms. The following tables exhibit the three personal pronouns in their various numbers and cases.

Gender is not distinguished.

Singular / Plural

(First Person)

Nom. *ယ* / *ဝ*

Poss. *ယ* / *ဝ*

Obj. *ယး* [pronounced *ယး* by D.P.] / *ဝး* [pronounced *ဝး* by D.P.]

(Second Person)

Nom. *န* / *နံ့*

Poss. *န* / *နံ့*

Obj. *နး* [D.P pronounce it *နး*] / *နံ့*

(Third Person)

Nom. *အဝှာ* / *အဝှာံ*

Poss. *အဝှာအ* / *အဝှာံအ*

Obj. *အဝှာ* / *အဝှာံ*

56-57. After the verb *မဲ့*, *to be*, the objective forms of the personal pronouns are used instead of nominative forms; e.g. *မဲ့ယးလီ*. (not *မဲ့ယ*)

လီၤ.) it is I.

58. Besides the regular pronouns, Karen possesses a pronominal affix ဝဲ. This is affixed to verbs in the third person, particularly in subordinate clauses. It is also affixed to pronouns of all persons in forming compounds. When ဝဲ follow a verb it is never an object; e.g. ဂံလၢၤစမ့ၣ်ည့ၣ်ဝဲနီၤ, နဒၢၤ the house which S' Myat built, have you seen it? There ဝဲ refers to the subject, S' Myat, and not to the object, ဂံ. In this construction ဝဲဒၢၤ is often used like ဝဲ.

59-61. The simple forms tabulated under [55](#) form a base from which a number of pronominal forms are built up, by means of the particles ဝဲ and ဒၢ, the word န့ဆါ, self, and the demonstrative adjectives, ယီ this, and နီ that. Such forms are generally self-explanatory. Their cases are indicated like those of nouns. The more common forms are noted below.

Singular / Plural

1st Pers. ယဝဲဒၢၤ, ယဝဲဒၢ / ပဝဲဒၢၤ, ပဝဲဒၢ

2nd Pers. နဝဲဒၢၤ, နဝဲဒၢ / နဝဲဒၢၤ, နဝဲဒၢ

3rd Pers. အဝဲဒၢ, အဝဲဒၢ / အဝဲဒၢ, အဝဲဒၢလၢ

[ယဝဲဒၢ and နဝဲဒၢ are the forms used colloquially.]

62. The absolute forms of the pronoun (like the absolute form of the noun) are generally followed by one of the demonstrative adjectives ယီ and နီ and sometimes by the particle ဘီ; e.g. ယဝဲဒၢယီ, အဝဲဒၢနီ, နဝဲဒၢဘီ.

63. In the absolute forms, ဒၢ is often omitted.

e.g. ယဝဲ, ယလဲၣ်ည့ၣ်အဲ, as for me, I cannot go.

64. In the first and second persons, the objective form often takes the place of the proper absolute form.

e.g. ယၤ, ယကဘၤလဲၣ်. As for me, I shall have to go.

65. The use of the absolute form is illustrated in the following sentences; နဝဲဒၢယီ နလဲၣ်ည့ၣ်အဲ as for you, you cannot go.

အဝဲဒၢနီ အဂံၤအိၤလၢဝံးတခိၤအဖၤလီၤ as for them, their house is in Rangoon.

Intensive Pronouns.

66. Intensive forms of the personal pronouns are formed by adding to

the possessive case the word နှုတ်, self, and the particle တွေ. They are as follows.

Singular / Plural

1st Pers. ယနှုတ်ဒုယတု / ပနှုတ်ဒုပတု.

2nd Pers. နှုတ်ဒုနတု / နှုတ်ဒုအနှုတ်ဒုနတု.

3rd Pers. အနှုတ်ဒုနတု / အနှုတ်ဒုအနှုတ်ဒုနတု, အနှုတ်ဒုအနှုတ်ဒုနတု.

67. The forms are used in apposition with a substantive, for emphasis.

e.g. စတိအနှုတ်ဒုနတုကလွေလီ, S' Tun himself will go.

ယကလွေယနှုတ်ဒုနတုလီ. I will go myself.

68. The same thing may be indicated by affixing the forms ဒုယ, ဒုပ တု etc. to the verb. e.g. နှုတ်ကလွေဒုယနှုတ်ဒုနတုလီ. you will go yourselves.

69. The forms mentioned in 68, affixed to nouns which follow a substantive in the possessive, convey the same idea as the English word own;

e.g. ယလံဒုယတု, ယလံဒုယယု my own book.

### Reflexive Pronouns.

70. Reflexive forms of the personal pronouns are made by affixing to the possessive case the word ဘ် self. They are as follows.

Singular / Plural

1st Pers. ယဘ် / ပဘ်

2nd Pers. နဘ် / နှုတ်အဘ်

3rd Pers. အဘ် / အဘ်

71. These forms are used as the objects of the verbs, when the person affected by the action is the same as the person performing it; e.g. စတိဆွေလွေအဘ်လီ, S' Myat stabs himself. These forms always appear as direct objectives, while the intensive forms previously described are generally used in apposition. An intensive pronoun, however, sometimes takes the place of a proper reflexive.

72. The pronoun အ may also be classed among the reflexives. It takes the place of the personal pronoun of the third person in indirect discourse, referring to the speaker;

e.g. ယဖိၤခွၢ်လၢအကလုၤလီၤ, my son says that he (son) will go.

#### Possessive Pronouns.

73. The possessive pronouns mine, thine, etc. are formed by affixing ဝှာ or ဆၢ to the possessive forms of the personal pronouns;

e.g. လံၤနီၤမ့ၤယဝှာလီၤ, လံၤနီၤမ့ၤယဆၢလီၤ, that book is mine.

74. ဝှာ and ဆၢ may be similarly used with nouns in the possessive case;

e.g. လံၤနီၤမ့ၤစ့မ့ၤဝှာလီၤ or လံၤနီၤမ့ၤစ့မ့ၤအဆၢလီၤ, that book is S' Myat's.

#### Demonstrative Pronouns.

75. Properly speaking, the Karen language has no demonstrative pronouns. Their place is supplied, however, by combining the demonstrative adjectives ယီၤ, this and နီၤ, that, with the personal pronoun of the third person. အဝှာယီၤ this, အဝှာနီၤ that.

#### Interrogative Pronouns.

76. The Interrogative adjectives described in [101](#) and [102](#), are used also as interrogative pronouns; e.g. အဝှာမးဆၢနီၤလဲၤ what is he doing?

န့ၣ်အပလာလကလဲၤ whom do you see?

ဂံၤနံၤဖျိၣ်နီၤ နအဲၣ်ဒိၣ်ထဖျိၣ်ဖျိၣ်လဲၤ, which of the two houses do you like?

77. The interrogative possessive pronoun, whose, is formed by affixing ဝှာ or အဆၢ to the interrogative pronoun ပလာ; e.g. လံၤအဝှာယီၤမ့ၤပလာဝှာလဲၤ; လံၤအဝှာယီၤမ့ၤပလာအဆၢလဲၤ whose is this book?

#### Indefinite Pronouns

78. ဆၢ is used as the subject of impersonal verbs;

e.g. ဆၢဂဲၤဆၢလုၤလီၤ, it rains.

79. ယှ or ဆၢ is often used as an indefinite subject to a verb in the third person singular, when we do not know, or do not wish to express, the subject of the verb; e.g. ဆၢ (or ယှ) ဒိၣ်ဝှာလီၤ, somebody beat him.

80. ယှ is often used indefinitely in the objective case to express people in general.

81-82. ဆၢ is used as an indefinite object to verbs which require one



but to which no definite object can be assigned;

e.g. ယဒါဆာလီ, I see, literally, I see things.

83. Many of the indefinite adjectives described under 99 are also used as indefinite pronouns;

e.g. နအံ့ဒါယာတ, ပွဲနုယာ နးတံ့ဆံ, if you see any fish, buy me one.

### Adjective.

84. Most of the roots which in English would be regarded as essentially adjectival in their signification, are in Karen considered as verbs. Under this head come all the roots expressive of quality; e.g. the root ဂု, expressive of goodness, means, not good, but to be good. So with many roots expressive of quantity; e.g. ဒိ means, not great, but to be great. And such words are constantly used as verbs, the verbal meaning being the primitive one.

### Adjectives of Quality.

85. Adjectives of quality are generally adjective (relative) clauses in an abbreviated form. "A good man" would originally be expressed by ပု လာအဂု, a man that is good. But it is commonly expressed in an abbreviated form, ပုအဂု, the relative conjunction, လာ, being omitted. It is sometimes still further abbreviated by omitting the pronoun အ, when it would stand simply ပုဂု, ပုရဂု.

### Adjectives of Quantity

86-87. Some adjectives expressive of magnitude are formed by prefixing the particle ဖ (very) to verbal roots. Such adjectives immediately follow the nouns which they modify; e.g. ပုရဖဒိ a great man.

### Numeral Adjectives.

88. The following are the cardinal numerals.

၁ လာ, ၂ နီ, ၃ ဘ, ၄ လံ, ၅ ယဲ, ၆ ဟ, ၇ နွာ, ၈ ပိ, ၉ ခွာ, ၁၀ ကဆံ, ၁၁ ကဆံလာ, ၁၀၀ ကယာ, ၁၀၀၀ ကထီ, ၁၀၀၀၀ ကလ, ၁၀၀,၀၀၀ ကကု, ၁,၀၀၀,၀၀၀ ကခွဲ, ၁၀,၀၀၀,၀၀၀ ကဘု.

89. A numeral adjective almost invariably follows the noun which it modifies, and is itself followed by an auxiliary word expressing some quality of the noun to which it refers; e.g. ပုရှယဲဂဲ, five men. ဂဲ is the numeral adjunct used in speaking of rational beings. ပနီၤၤဒု three buffaloes. ဒု is the numeral adjunct used in speaking of quadrupeds.

## 90. Numeral Adjuncts.

ကဲ the bend of a river ထံချီကကဲ or ထံကကဲ

ကဲ a strip of bamboo or wood ဝကကဲ, ဝံကကဲ

ကု a piece of bamboo or wood ဝကကု, ဝံကကု

ခဲ a burnt stick ဝံမုကခဲ

ခု (1) a stick နီခုကခု (2) a petticoat နံကခု

မိ couples, pairs, guns, carts, ပနီကမိ a yoke of buffaloes, ကျီကမိ a gun. လဲကမိ a cart.

ခါ sides of things ခုနံခါ two feet

ချု coils ဂုကချု, ဖျဲကချု

ခွ garlands ဖီကခွ

ဂဲ rational beings ပုရှၤၤဂဲ

ဂိ a portion of kauk hnyin မုအဲကဂိ

ဂီ two handfuls ဘုကဂီ, ဂူဆာကဂီ

စူ one handful ဘုကစူ, ဂူဆာကစူ

ဆာ stories, flats ကဆာနံဆာ

ဆဲ ears of paddy ဘုကဆဲ

ဆာ verses လံကဆာနံဆာ

ဆာ races, nations ပုရှကဆာ

တၢ baskets ဘုကတၢ

ထံ words ဆာချဲကထံ

ထံ trees ဝံကထံ

ထု posts, trees ဝံကထု

ထု bundles ဝကထု

ထူ rolls ချီကထူ

ဒဲ tides ထံကဒဲ

ဒု quadrupeds ထံနံဒု

ဒိ bees, nests နံကဒိ, ထံအွံကဒိ

ဒိ group of persons ဂံဖီကဒိ

ပိ heaps လီခကပိ

ဖာ flowers ဖီဆာဆူနံဖာ

ဖး openings ပဲတရၢၤၤဖး

ဖာ felled trees ဝံကဖာ

ဖျိ spherical or approximately spherical objects

(လံးဓာသကဖျိ, ဂံးကဖျိ, ချံးကဖျိ, ကဘးကဖျိ, လးဆးနးကဖျိ)

ဘံး (1) flat things ယကဘံး/လံးကဘံး (2) fowls etc. ထီကဘံး one bird

ဘီး cylindrical ဂုကဘီး

မံး a thing ဆကမံးနံး

မီး words ဆးခဲးကမီး

ယီး T.P. ယွ D.P songs and poems ဆးအံးလယီး, ဆးအံးလယွ

လး places ဆံးကလး, ဗုးကလး

91. There are a number of words denoting portions, quantities or collections, which are used in a similar manner to the numeral auxiliaries;

e.g. ထံးကကွံး a drink of water, မုးကစူ a handful of sand.

92. When there is no numeral adjunct proper to a noun, and sometimes even when there is a numeral which might be used, the noun itself is repeated after the numeral; ဝံးကဝံး a city, ခးကခး a country, ဂံးကဂံး a house.

93. Sometimes there is a choice of numeral adjuncts for the same noun; e.g. မုးလလတီး, မုးလလဖျိ an eye.

94. Numerals are sometimes prefixed to the nouns which they modify; e.g. ကဝံးဘကဝံး from town to town, ယဲနံးဗျာနံး five or six days.

95. The numeral adjuncts regularly follow the numerals with which they stand. But when the numeral is ten or a multiple of ten, the adjunct precedes the numeral, and is itself preceded by the particle အ;

e.g. ပုးအဂး နံးဆံး twenty men.

96-97. The formation of the ordinal numerals will easily be understood from the following examples.

အဆုထံး ကကး the first (man) / အဆုထံး means beginning

အဆုထံး ကမံး the first (thing)

နံးကကး the second (man)

ဘးမံး ကမံး the third (thing)

လံးကကး the fourth (quadruped)

98. Multiplicatives are formed by affixing *ဝ* to the cardinal numerals;  
e.g. သုတ threefold.

### Indefinite Adjectives.

99. The numeral adjuncts form the basis of a number of common idioms expressing ideas of number or quantity.

(1) Certain indefinite numeral adjectives are combined with the numeral auxiliaries, in the same manner as the cardinal numerals.

These are အ many, ရှ few, and တချို့ several

e.g. ဖိသခွာအာက many boys, ဖိသမုရက few girls, ပုရတချို့က several men.

(2) The numeral က or လ one, with an appropriate numeral, often has the sense of the English indefinite article, e.g. ချံကဖို့ a boat.

(3) The numeral က or လ one, with a reduplicated numeral is used in referring indefinitely to a person or thing; e.g. ပုမကက some woman, ဆကဘံဘံ some fowl.

(4) The indefinite adjective of quantity, ကနဲ့ or လနဲ့, some, is formed from the numeral က or လ by means of the particle နဲ့.

(5) The reduplicated form ကနဲ့နဲ့ or လနဲ့နဲ့ is used in referring indefinitely to more than one person or thing;  
ပုရ ကနဲ့နဲ့ some men, ခဲတက ကနဲ့နဲ့ some pencils.

(6) In a similar way are formed  
ကဆံ or လဆံ, ကဆံဆံ or လဆံဆံ, a little.

(7) Universality is expressed by placing a numeral auxiliary between က or လ and လါလါ; e.g. ကမံလါလါ every thing.

(8) The same idea is expressed by placing a numeral auxiliary between ကိ and ဒှ; e.g. ပုရကိကိဒှ every man.

(9) Completeness is expressed by placing a numeral adjunct between ထက and ယာ; e.g. ဝံထကဖို့ယာ the whole city.

(10) A complete number may be expressed by affixing လူ or ယာ, to any one of the ordinal numerals; e.g. ဘုမံလူ, ဘုမံယာ all three (things)

(11) Singularity is expressed by placing the numeral က or လ with the suitable adjunct between နှာ and လီ; e.g. နှာကလီ only one (man)

(12) Identity is expressed by placing the numeral adjunct between က or လ and ဗး, e.g. ပုရှကဗး the same man.

(13) Utter non-existence of a thing is expressed by introducing a numeral auxiliary between နး and အူ, e.g. ထွံအီနးဒူအူ there is not a single dog.

100. Certain other indefinite adjectives of quantity are formed independently of the numeral system. Such are ထီးလူ or ထီးအလူ, ထီးလူထီးဆံ့ or ထီးအလူအဆံ့ all, which follow their nouns; e.g. ပုရှထီးလူ or ပုရှထီးအလူ all men. ထီးဒု whoever, or whatever, which precedes its noun; e.g. ထီးဒုပုရှ whatever man.

### Interrogative Adjectives.

101. The common interrogatives are ပလာကက or လက referring to persons, and ဆနီလမံ့ referring to things;

e.g. နဂဲလဆရာပလာလကလဲ with what teacher did you come?

နအဲဒိအူ ဆနီအသ လမံ့လဲ what fruit do you want to eat?

After ဆနီ, လမံ့ may be omitted, in which case the construction would be နအဲဒိအူဆနီ သလဲ.

102. An interrogative with a selective force is formed by prefixing ဝ to the appropriate numeral adjunct;

e.g. နအဲဒိဒီးထဘံ့ဘံ့လဲ which knife do you want?

103. Interrogative adjectives of quantity are made by prefixing ဆံ to the indefinite adjectives of quantity; e.g. ဆံဒိ how great, ဆံအ how much, how many. နဘုအီ ဆံအလဲ how much paddy have you? These are used both in direct and indirect discourse. In indirect discourse they sometimes suffer reduplication; e.g. နစုအီ ဆံအဆံအလဲနီ ယဘုယအူ, I do not know how much money you have.

104. Interrogative adjectives of number may be formed by prefixing ဗွဲ to the numeral adjunct; e.g. နလံအိမ် ဗွဲဘိယဲလဲ how many books have you? These also may be used in indirect discourse.

105-108. The Karen language has two definite demonstrative adjectives,

ယီ, အယီ this, and နီ, အနီ that. They may modify the substantive element, be it noun, pronoun, phrase or clause. နီ is used to mark the end of a noun clause, or of a series of adjectival modifiers of a noun; e.g. ပုမုဘၢၣ်ၤအဂ္ဂုလၢအအိၣ်ဝဲၣ် လၢဂံၣ်ဖး လၢဂီၣ်, မွဲယမိလီၤ, the good old woman who lives in the house is my mother.

#### Adjectival Couplets.

109. Adjectival couplets are affixed to the nouns which they modify. Such a couplet consists of two adjectival roots, each of which is preceded by the particle အ. e.g. ပုၣ်အဂ္ဂုအဘွဲ a good man.

#### Comparison of Adjectives.

110-111. The comparative degree is expressed by affixing နဲ to the adjective, e.g. ဘွဲ white, ဘွဲနဲ whiter.

112. The superlative degree is formed by affixing ထု to the adjective

ဘွဲထု whitest.

#### Verbs.

113. Karen verbs express actions, states, or qualities;

e.g. လဲ to go, အိ to be, ဂဲ to be good.

114. Karen verbs may be divided into transitive and intransitive verbs. Many verbs which in English are regarded as intransitive, in Karen are regarded as transitive and take an object; e.g. the verb လဲ to go, is often used with the object ဆၢ.

115. In Karen, a verb which can take an object generally does take one. When no definite object can be assigned, the indefinite object ဆၢ is frequently used; e.g. ယဒၢဆၢ I see. See [81-82](#).



116. Karen verbs have no inflections, properly so called. The accidents of voice, mood, tense, person, and number, are expressed by particles connected with the verb, or are left to be inferred from the subject.

#### Voice.

117. Three voices may be recognized in Karen; active, passive, and middle.

118. The verb in its simple and primitive form is in the active voice; e.g. in the sentence ယဒဒအဝ္ဗာလီာ, I see him, ဒဒ is in the active voice.

119-121. The formation of the passive voice is peculiar. A few examples will make it clearer than any explanation.

The following sentences exhibit the passive of the verb ဒိာ, to strike. ယဘာဆဒိာယဒလီာ, I am struck. အဝ္ဗာဘာဆဒိာဝ္ဗာလီာ, he is struck.

122. When it is desired to convey the idea that the subject voluntarily submits to an action, the passive voice is differently expressed. In this case, the verbal root is preceded by ဒိာ or ထိး and followed by a reflexive pronoun; e.g. အဝ္ဗာဒိာဒိာအဘာ he is beaten, he permits himself to be beaten. စမ္မာထိးဒိာအဘာ, S' Myat is beaten, submits to being beaten.

123. Closely allied to this second form of the passive voice is a form used to convey the idea that a thing is in a certain state as the result of an action which has been performed upon it. e.g. ဆာကွာအဘာ It is written.

124. The middle voice expresses the idea that the subject performs an action upon himself. To express this the active form of the verb is followed by the particle လဒ, and a reflexive pronoun; e.g. ယဒဒလဒယဘာလီာ, I see myself.

#### Mood.

125. There are only two moods in Karen, the indicative and the imperative.

126. The primitive form of the verb is indicative.

127. The primitive form of the verb may be used in the imperative;  
e.g. လာ, go!

128. When a verb is in the imperative mood the sentence (if expressing a command) commonly ends with the particle ဆံ့  
e.g. လာလာအဝှာအအိဆံ့, go to him!

129. The particle လါ is sometimes affixed to the verb in an imperative sentence where the idea is that of entreating a superior;  
e.g. ဆီဂုလါပဆံ့, bless us.

130. In giving permission, ကဒ or ဘိ sometimes takes the place of ဆံ့,  
e.g. လာကဒ, လာဘိ go.

131. A sentence expressing a prohibition ends in လဂ္ဂ;  
e.g. လာလဂ္ဂ do not go. In such cases the verb may be preceded by နံ and the negative particle ထီး; e.g. နံထီးလာလဂ္ဂ, do not go.

132. A precative sentence is introduced by the particle မွဲ and otherwise has the form of a sentence expressing command or prohibition;  
e.g. မွဲမဆံ့, let us do it. မွဲပထီးမလဂ္ဂ let us not do it.

#### Tense.

133. The verb standing by itself conveys no idea of time. It may refer to past or present time according to the context;  
e.g. ယဆာန့လီ may mean I sit, I am sitting or I sat.

134. An action the performance of which is contemplated, is expressed by prefixing the particle က or မိ to the verb. This form is commonly used to express a future action; e.g. ယကလ္လ, ယမိလ္လ I shall go, I will go.

135. The idea of intention or desire is brought but more strongly by prefixing မိ to the verb;  
e.g. စမ္မိလ္လီ, S' Myat desires to go, intends to go.

136. Completed action is indicated by affixing the particle ယှ် to the verb, e.g. ယဂဲယှ် I have come.

137. The same idea is more emphatically expressed by introducing ဂိး before ယှ်; e.g. ယဒဂိးယှ်, I had seen it.

138. The Karens sometimes use both က and ယှ် with the same verb to express an intention to perform an action immediately; e.g. ယကလှဲယှ် I should have gone.

139. To mark the completion of an action previous to a certain moment of past time, ဝဲ is affixed to the verb, and is often followed by ယှ်;

e.g. ယလချုးလှဲဒံဘနီ အဝဲဒုဒလှဲဝဲယှ်, before I came he had gone.

This usage is analogous to the English pluperfect.

140. An action dependent upon a supposed condition contrary to fact is sometimes expressed by prefixing က to the root and affixing ယှ် or ဝဲယှ်; e.g. နအုလဂဲဘတ ယကလှဲဝဲယှ်လီ if you had not come I should have gone by this time.

#### Person and Number.

141. The person and number of the verb are to be inferred from those of the subject, but a verb in the third person sometimes takes ဝဲ after it;

e.g. ပုဒိမဖဒိ လှဲဝဲလီ the governor goes.

#### Compound verbs.

142. Besides the simple verbs, each of which consists as a rule of a single syllable, there are compound verbs formed by combining simple verbs with particles, or with other verbs.

143. A verbal couplet is formed by two verbal roots, each of which is followed by a particle; e.g. ဆူထဲနဲထဲ to believe. ဒိယထီထီ to grow up. ဆံလှဲလှဲ to decrease. လီဘလဘ to tell. ဆံဝဲဝဲ to be holy.

144. The Karen language possesses a number of particles which are combined with simple verbs to make new verbs of kindred signification. Many of these particles were originally verbal roots, and are sometimes used as verbs; but in the connection under discussion they

are to be considered as particles.

145. The following particles are prefixed to the verb: --

ကျဲ denotes a representing of the action as if done, often only in appearance; e.g. ကျဲနံ to assume the appearance of laughing.

ထိပ် prefixed to a few verbs, has a causative force; e.g. ထိပ်ဝဲယု to wake up.

ဒု has a permissive or causative force; e.g. ဒုလု to send.

ဖု has a permissive or causative force; e.g. ဖုအံယု to increase (transitive)

ဘိပ် prefixed to a few verbs, has a causative force; e.g. ဘိပ်ဘုယု inform.

မဲ has a causative force, မဲဝံ to kill.

လဲ indicates the subject falls into the state indicated by the verb; e.g. လဲပွဲ to become tired.

လဲ has also a causative force; e.g. လဲနံ to make one laugh.

ဝါ prefixed to verbs with the negative, indicates that the act is performed imperfectly or in a slight degree; e.g. ယုယုဝါအံ, I scarcely know.

146. The following particles are affixed to the verb: --

ကဒဲ has a sense of return, retaliation or opposition; e.g. ထဲကဒဲထဲ to return.

ကဒယု has a concessive force; e.g. နံဆံနိမ္မဲကဒယု admitting the truth of what you say.

ခါ indicates that the act is performed by way of trial; e.g. မဲခါ to try.

ခွဲ denotes that the action results in a separation; e.g. မန့်ခွဲ to take away.

ဂန့ denotes that the act is performed by way of assistance; e.g. လုံးဂန့, to go together with one.

ဂူ denotes that the action is done carefully, or stealthily; e.g. ယိဂူ, to watch closely.

ဗု denotes that several persons or things act together; e.g. မဗု to work together.

ဗိ denotes that several persons or things act in company; e.g. အုဗိလုံးမု to eat rice together.

စိ denotes that the act is done from a distance; e.g. ယိစိ to look away. ဒုစိ to behold afar off.

ဆန့ denotes that the action is performed by way of assistance; e.g. ယကကူဆန့နု, I will help you reap.

ဆိ denotes that an act is done before some event takes place; e.g. ယဒဆိအဝှာအဂံ I saw his house first.

ရှု denotes that the act was done unintentionally; e.g. ကိရှု to utter an involuntary cry.

တတ shows that the action is hastened; e.g. အုတတ eat quickly.

ထထ denotes that the action results in making secure; e.g. မထထထ to hinder.

ထု indicates an upward motion; e.g. လုံးထု to go up.

ထု is affixed to a few words denoting separation; e.g. လုံးထု to fall off.

ထိ denotes that the action results in arriving; e.g. လုံးထိ to arrive.

ဒၢ indicates that the action results in forsaking; e.g. စဲဒၢ to forsake.

ဒၢ indicates independent action; e.g. ယကမဒၢယွၤ or ယဝဲ I will do it myself.

ဒၢခလူ indicates that the subject defers some other action to perform the one indicated by the verb;

e.g. အိမ်ဒၢခလူ wait a bit. ယကမံဒၢခလူ I will sleep first.

ဒၢ occasionally denotes certainty;

e.g. ဆၢကမဒၢအဘၣ်နီၤလီၤ, It will be sure to happen so.

န့ indicates that the action results in observing; e.g. န့ထွဲ to remember.

န့ indicates that the action results in obtaining; e.g. ဒၢန့ to find.

ဖိး indicates that the action reaches unto its object; e.g. လုးဖိး to go unto.

ဖျီ indicates that the action results in going through;

e.g. လုးဖျီ to go through.

ဘၢ indicates that the action passes over to an object;

e.g. ယကလီၤဘၢန့ I will tell you.

ဘၢ indicates that the action results in an ascent; e.g. ထ့ဘၢ to reach up.

လ့ indicates a downward motion, literal or figurative;

e.g. လုးလ့ to descend, ရှ့လ့ to decrease.

လီၤ indicates that the act is performed by or for imitation;

e.g. ဒီးလီၤ to teach, မးလီၤ to learn.

လီၤ indicates reciprocal action;

e.g. ပကြဲၣ်အဲၤလီၤတၢၢ်လီၤ, we should love one another.

ဘ့ indicates an incipient action;



e.g. ထီးအဝှာကဲဘၣ်ပုဒ်မိဖိဒ်နီၣ်, when he had just become governor.

အံ့ affixed to several verbs. See Dictionary Part I pages 161-164.

#### Dependent Verbs.

147. A verb depending on another, follows it immediately, without undergoing any change of form; e.g. အဝှာကဲကျွံၣ်မိဖိဒ်လီၤ, he will try to do it. This is the common construction for expressing suitability, necessity; etc.

e.g. ပကြံၣ်လုၣ်လီၤ, I should go, နဘၣ်လုၣ်လီၤ, you must go.

148. Where in English two verbs are connected by the conjunction and, in Karen the second verb may immediately follow the first, without a conjunction; e.g. ယကလုၣ်အံ့ဖိမိဖိလီၤ, I will go and cook rice.

#### Idioms in the Use of Verbs

149. The causative verb အံ့မၤ and the permissive verb ပျဲ permit the dependent verb to be preceded by a subject;

e.g. အဝှာအံ့မၤယမလီၤ, he caused me to do it.

ပျဲအဝှာလုၣ်ဘီၣ်, let him go.

The dependent verb and its subject may be regarded as a substantive clause, forming the object of the causative or permissive verb.

150. Verbs expressing ability stand at the end of the sentence (or clause) preceded by the verb expressing the act in question, with its subject and object if it have one; e.g. အဝှာကွၢ်လံၣ်လုၣ်လီၤ, he can write.

The verb and its subject may be regarded as a substantive clause forming the subject of the verb of ability.

151. The following list exhibits the common verbs of ability, with their meanings and examples of their use.

ကဲၣ် ability, considered with reference to physical health, or inclination;

e.g. ယခဲဆၢ, ယကဖၢကဲၣ်အံ့, my foot is sore, I cannot walk.

ကိၣ် ability, considered with reference to the sufficiency of the subject;

e.g. ဆၢမအံၤလံၣ်, ယမကိၣ်အံ့, there are too many, I cannot do them.

ချုပ် ability, considered with reference to leisure;

e.g. ယဆာမအာ, ယလိက္ခဏ်ချုပ်အူ, I am busy, I have no time to play.

ပံ့လံ့ ability, considered with reference to the sufficiency of the

subject; e.g. ဆာမအာလံ, ယမကကပံ့လံ့အူ, the work is too much, I cannot do it alone.

ပွဲထွဲ ability, considered with reference to the sufficiency of the subject;

e.g. ဆာမအာလံ ယမပွဲထွဲအူ, the work is too great, I cannot do it.

န့ ability, considered with reference to effectiveness of effort; e.g.

အဝှာအဆာမအိ, ယအုလံ့အဝှာန့အူ, he has work, I cannot hire him.

ဘာ ability, considered with reference to accomplishing the end proposed;

e.g. လံယိကလံ, ယဖိဘာအူ, this book is too difficult, I cannot read it.

ဝှာ ability, considered with reference to skill, also the generic

expression of ability; e.g. ယဒဘနုကကူတ, ယမဝှာလိ, I saw it only once yet I can do it.

152. The ideas of suitability, agreeableness etc. are often expressed in a similar manner to that of potentiality;

e.g. နမဆာယိဘုဇ, dare you do this?

ယထူပနိမုအူ, I do not like to ride a buffalo.

ပမဆာယိမဲ့အလဂုဘဇ, had we not better do this?

ယမဆာယိကြံဇ, is it proper for me to do this?

153. The verb မိ, expressing desire, takes ဆာ for its subject and is followed by a verb denoting that act the performance of which is desired. This latter verb is followed by ဘ, self, with the possessive case of a pronoun denoting the person who desires to perform the action. Then comes the object of the verb of action, generally introduced by လာ,

e.g. ဆာမိဒယဘလအဝှာလိ, I want to see him.

အဝှာဒမိဗွဲပနိလဒုလိ, he wishes to buy a buffalo.

154. Possession is expressed by the verb အိ, to be in the following

ways:

(1) The possessor stands as the subject and the thing possessed follows the verb, with which it is connected by the preposition ခဲ.

e.g. ယအိမ်ခဲခဲတကတိ, I have a pencil.

(2) The thing possessed, modified by a possessive pronoun or noun, may stand as the subject of the verb; e.g. ယလံအိမ်ကတိ, I have a book.

### Adverbs.

155. Karen adverbs are mostly derived from other roots, though a few strictly adverbial roots exist.

### Adverbs of Manner.

156. Adverbs of manner are regularly formed by duplicating adjective roots; e.g. ဆိ့ဆိ့, strongly, ဖျဲဖျဲ, quickly.

157. Adverbs so formed very commonly take the affix လုလ; e.g. ဆိ့ဆိ့လုလ, very strongly.

158-160. Sometimes an adjectival root is used in an adverbial sense. This is commonly the case when it is itself modified by another adverb;

e.g. အဝုစဲဖျဲမလ, he runs very fast. ယဝဲဖျဲအလ, I do not run swiftly.

161. Many adverbs of manner are irregular in their formation; e.g. လုထံးလုဆု, exactly.

162. Demonstrative adverbs of manner are formed by combining the preposition ဘဲ, like, with the demonstrative ယိ and နီ, or with လဲ; e.g. ဘဲယိ, ဘဲယိအဝိ, ဘဲနီ, ဘဲနီအဝိ, thus ဘဲသုလဲ, how, ဘဲအံးဘဲအိ, somehow. See [202](#).

### Adverbs of Place.

163. Adverbs of place may be formed from the demonstrative adjectives ယိ and နီ in combination with the prepositions ထိး, လ, or ခါခါ. They are exhibited in the following table, ထိးယိ here, ထိးနီ there,

ထဲလဲ or ခါခါလဲ where. ထိးယိထိးနီ or ထိးအံးထိးအိ here and there.

လၢယီၤ here. လၢနီၤ there. ထလဲၤ where. လၢအံၤလၢအံၤ, here and there.  
လၢယီၤ, hither. လၢနီၤ, thither. ထလဲၤ, whither. လၢယီၤလၢနီၤ, hither and thither.

164. The preposition လၢ forms adverbs of place in combination with such roots as ယၢ front, ခဲၣ် back, ထၢ above, လၢ below, ဝါ beyond and ခါ side, e.g. လၢယၢ forward, လၢခဲၣ် behind, လၢဝါခါ beyond.

#### Adverbs of Time

165. Certain adverbs denoting past time are formed by the prefix လၢ in combination with roots denoting time, as follows: --

လၢဂီၤအံၤ, this morning

လၢမုၤန့ၤအံၤ, last night

လၢမုၤဂၢၤအံၤ, yesterday

လၢအခါၤကန့ၢၤအံၤ, last week

လၢလၢခါၤကဘံၣ်အံၤ, last month

လၢမၤဂၢၤန့ၣ်အံၤ, last year

166. Adverbs expressing future time may be formed in two ways: --

(1) By the prefix [ကဲၤ T.P] [ကိၤ D.P]

ကဲၤမုၤဆၢ/ကိၤမုၤဆၢ, today.

ကဲၤမုၤဂၢၤ/ကိၤမုၤဂၢၤ, this evening.

ကဲၤမုၤန့ၤ/ကိၤမုၤန့ၤ, tonight.

ကဲၤဂီၤ/ကိၤဂီၤ, tomorrow.

ကဲၤတဂီၤ/ကိၤတဂီၤ, the day after tomorrow.

ကဲၤခဲၣ်/ကိၤခဲၣ်, in the future.

(2) By the prefix နး followed by ဒီး.

နးနံၤဒီး, next day

နးန့ၢၤဒီး, next week

နးနံၣ်ဒီး, next year

(3) By the use of the preposition လၢ, cf. [164](#).

လၢခဲၣ်/လၢခဲၣ်ထဲၣ်, afterwards.

လၢယၢ/လၢယၢခါ, in the future.

ထီးယီၤလၢယၢ, henceforth.

167-168. လာ is prefixed to some temporal adverbs when the idea of futurity is not implied; e.g. လာမုဆာခါ, by day. လာဖျိလ္လဲ, of old.

169. Many adverbs of time are not formed in accord with any rule; e.g. ချဲချဲ, quickly, ထံး, always.

170. The roots ဒံ, still, yet, and လာ, any more, are adverbial by virtue of their intrinsic signification. The following examples will illustrate their use; အဝံဆီမိလ္လဲအကဲဒံ တဘျုးဘျုးလီ, he thinks he will still come several times. ယလ္လဲဒံအု, I have not yet gone. အဝံအဘျုးအိ လာအု, he has no more paddy.

#### Numeral Adverbs.

171. Adverbs denoting how many times are formed from the cardinal numeral, in combination with the affix ဘျုး; လဘျုး, once. နံဘျုး, twice.

172. ဘျုး is treated like numeral auxiliaries, and may enter into all the combinations of which numeral auxiliaries are capable;

e.g. လဘျုး, simultaneously, at once (ကုကု)

လဘျုးဘျုး sometimes

ကိဘျုးဒံ, every time

လံဘျုးယာ, as many as four times.

173. Adverbs denoting which time are formed like ordinal numerals; e.g. အခုထံလဘျုး, the first time, ဘုဘျုးလဘျုး, the third time.

174. The particle က, ဖာ and ဘျုး enter into certain irregular formations;

e.g. ထီးနီကက, ထီးနီလဖာ, ထီးနီလဘျုး, then, afterward, after that.

#### Adverbs of Degree.

175. Some adverbs of degree are formed like the adverbs of manner described in [156](#) and [157](#); e.g. ဒိဒိလ္လဲ, greatly. အာအာလ္လဲ, much.

176. The indefinite numeral adjectives described in [99](#). (4) (6) (13) are often used with an adverbial force;

e.g. ယအဲဒိမဆာမအဝံယီးနးဆံအု, I do not like doing this work at all.

177. The following adverbs are intensive, ခိ, န, and မ.

They are used with adjectives denoting smallness or fewness.

178. A moderate degree is expressed by coupling two contradictory roots, each of which is modified by a negative;  
e.g. လဒိမ္မလဆံ, လအလရှ, moderately.

179. Other adverbs of degree are irregularly formed.  
e.g. နးဆံအ, not at all, ဖိဘိ about, လံ, ထလဂ or လိကဲက, too.

180. Equality is expressed by မိ့စိ or မိမိ e.g. အဝုဖိလံ ဖိထံ မိ့စိ or မိမိ ဒဲမိထံလိ, he reads Sgaw Karen equally with Pwo Karen.

181. Inequality is expressed by combination of two contradictory roots expressive of quantity; e.g. အဝုကြံအဲဒိမဆံအရှအဖိလဖအ, he should not love his children unequally.

#### Interrogative Adverbs.

182. Interrogative adverbs of time and place may be formed from the interrogative particle လဲ;  
e.g. ခါခါလဲ or ထခါလဲ where; ဆံလဲ when, whence, whither.

183. These are reduplicated in indirect discourse;  
e.g. အဝုဂဲခါခါလဲနိ ယဝုယအ, or အဝုဂဲထခါလဲခါလဲနိ ယဝုယအ, I do not know whence he comes.

184. Interrogative adverbs of quantity are formed by prefixing ဆံ to adjectives of quantity; e.g. ဆံအ, ဆံဒိ how much.

185. These are also repeated in indirect discourse. e.g. အဝုအအဲဒိဝုဆံအဆံအလဲနိ ယဝုယအ, I do not know how much he wants it.

186. The interrogative adverb of reason is ဘနိ, why?  
e.g. ဘနိနလအဘမ္မလဲ, why do not you eat rice?

#### Adverbs of Affirmation and Negation.

187. Assent is expressed by မွဲ or အံ.

188. Negative is expressed by affixing အ; e.g. အဝုဂဲအ, he has not come.

189. A denial is expressed by a negative sentence,



e.g. အဝှာဂဲးဇု, ဂဲးအု, has he come? No.

190. Adverbs of probability are irregular in formation;

e.g. ဘာလဘာ, perhaps. တရါ or ရှါမး certainly.

### Conjunctive Adverbs.

191. The following are conjunctive adverbs of time ထီး, when

e.g. ထီးယဒဘာနုဖါနီယ ကလီးဘာလီ, when I see your father I will tell him.

လချူ before;

e.g. လချူပလုးဒံဘာတံ ပကအုဆိာဒလုးမုးလီ, we will eat rice before we go.

အဘိးဘာ, အထးဖု, while; အဝှာလုးဆာအဘိးဘာတံ ဆာဝံအဘလီ, he was hungry while he was going. See 222.

192. ဒံ is used as a correlative conjunctive adverb; e.g. ယဒံမးလီလံ ယဒံအဲဒံမးလီလီ, the more I study, the more I wish to study.

### Adverbial Couplets.

193. Adverbial couplets are common; e.g. လာအာလုးအဆုထံ, in the beginning. ထီးအံးထီးအံး, here and there, ရှိာရှိာ slowly.

### Comparison of Adverbs.

194. Adverbs which are derived from adjectival roots are susceptible of comparison. An adverb in the comparative or superlative degree is in form exactly the same as the corresponding adjective in the same degree;

e.g. အဝှာစဲးဖျဲနဲအဖါ, he runs faster than his father.

### Prepositions.

195. The Karen language has several prepositions,

e.g. ဒဲ, စီးလာ, လာ, ထီး, ဗံးလု, ဝာဖီး.

196. ဒဲ means with, it governs the objective case.

197. စီးလာ means to or towards; it governs the objective case, but စီး is often omitted.

198. လာ means at or from, according to the context. It seldom governs a substantive directly, but usually governs a substantive in the possessive case. လာ in itself is extremely indefinite, and the secondary nouns are brought in to make the meaning more definite.

199. The more common of the secondary nouns are exemplified below:

--

လာအဝတ်အအိမ်, from him.

လာဆရာအကဲ့သို့, by or near the teacher.

လာပုဒ်မာမာအဆူထံ, at the governor's feet.

လာယနဲ့ထံ, by my side.

လာဝရံအမူယော, in front of the chapel.

လာတဝှေ့အလေးခံ, behind the village.

လာယချိုလခါ, on my back.

လာကုန်ချို, on the earth.

လာအဝတ်အလိမ့်, on him.

လာကံ့ဖူး, in the house.

လာစပွဲခေါ်, လာစပွဲအဖွဲ့ခေါ်, on the table.

လာယခေါ်, on my head.

လာကံ့ဖူးလ/လာကံ့အဖူးလ, under the house.

လာပုဂ္ဂိုလ်/လာပုဂ္ဂိုလ်အကျား, among the people.

လာတဝှေ့အဘို့ဆူး, between the villages.

လာတဝှေ့အနဲ့ထံဝလ, round about the village.

လာယဖွဲ့အကဲ, for my son's sake, for my son.

လာဆန်းအကိစ္စ, an account of that, because of that.

လာဝံးတခွဲအကဲ/လာဝံးတခွဲအကဲအဖူး/လာဝံးတခွဲအကဲအကိစ္စ, about Rangoon.

လာထံဖုံးခေါ်, on the surface of the water.

200. ထီး means in. It may govern the objective case.

201. စုံလုံ, throughout, ဝလ, round about, govern the objective.

202. ဘဲ like, as, always govern the secondary noun ဝိ, the object of comparison being placed in the possessive case;

e.g. အဖိုးမာ ဘဲဖါအဝိလီ, the son acts like the father.

Sometimes the object of comparison is a noun clause, when ဘဲ

corresponds in meaning to the English as; e.g. အဖိုးမာဝှေ့ ဘဲအဖါမာဝှေ့အဝိလီ, the son does as his father does. See [228](#).

## Conjunctions.

203. The Karen language has but few conjunctions, their place being supplied by phrases which are equivalent to conjunctions. These together with the more important conjunctive phrases will be found below.

### Copulative.

204. ခဲ and, connects words and phrases. It may stand at the close of the preceding clause or at the beginning of the following one.

ခဲ--ခဲ both-and.

e.g. ယွဲတဲးလုဒဲမုဒဲလဲ, the Lord God created both sun and moon.

ငါ--ငါ and -- also, e.g. နာငါပုခွာ, ယာငါပုခွာ, ပာမဲအဲ, you are a man and I also am a man, we are not afraid.

မးဒီးလဖာ, again.

လးယီး (or နီ) အမူးယာ moreover.

လးယီး (or နီ) အဖူးမိ moreover.

မဲ့နာ only.

### Adversative.

205. အ့မဲ့ (at the beginning of a clause) but

လါနာ, လါနာတဲ, လါနာဘိ, but

အ့လမဲ့ဘာတဲ, or else

မဲ့ဂူး--မဲ့ဂူး, either -- or

ဂူးဂူး--ဂူးဂူး either -- or

e.g. ခဲတဲမဲ့ဂူး လံမဲ့ဂူး ဗူးနုယာလမံမံဆဲ, buy me either a pencil or a book.

### Illative.

206. မွဲဘဲနီတဲ, အခိးမွဲဘဲနီတဲ, မးအဘဲဘဲနီတဲ, အယီးတဲ, အနီတဲ, and a few other phrases, take the place of the illative conjunction therefore.

207. The temporal adverbs ထီးနီလဖာ, and ထီးနီလဘျဲ, ထီးနီကကွာ, then, sometimes have the force of illative conjunctions.

### Causal.

208. အဂဲးဘဲယီး, because.

အကိုး because. This stands at the end of its clause; e.g. ယစူးရှာအကိုး ယဗူးလံနုအဲ, I cannot buy a book because I am short of money.

209. ထီး when.

အံ့ if. In this sense အံ့ stands immediately after the subject. See [223](#).

လါနု though, stands at the end of its clause;

e.g. အပွဲဒီလါနု ယကပွဲလီ၊ although the prize is high, I shall buy it.

မွဲလါနုဘဲနီတ၊ nevertheless.

#### Telic.

210-212. လံ that. See [220](#). ဘဲဒီ in order that. See [225-226](#).

#### Particles.

213. Most of the particles have been treated under the various parts of speech. A few which cannot be so treated to advantage are described here. They are used at the end of sentences to indicate the character of the sentence.

#### Affirmative Particles.

214-215. လီ is used with simple affirmatives. ဝံ implies that the statement is a matter of course. ယှ implies assent or concession.

#### Interrogative Particles.

216. ဧ is used when the answer expected is yes or no;

e.g. နဒအဝံဧ, do you see him?

လဲ is used when other answers are expected;

e.g. နမနီလဲ, what are you doing?

ဧ--ဧ, is used in a direct alternative question.

နအဲဒီလံဧ, ခဲတုဧ, do you want a book or a pencil?;

but ဧ--လဲ is used if the question is indirect;

e.g. အဝံလုလံတခိဧ, လံမီလဲလဲနီ ယဒုယအု,

I do not know whether he goes to Rangoon or Moulmein.

#### Imperative Particles.

217. ဆံ, marks a command; လဂု a prohibition;

ဘီ, a permission or a somewhat urgent request.

### Precative Particles.

218. ဘိ at the end of a declarative or imperative sentence, asks for consent. Hence it softens a command into a request;  
e.g. ပကထဲလှလှဘိ, let us go home, shall we not?

### Syntax of Subordinate Clauses.

219. Subordinate clauses are not only introduced by a conjunction or some equivalent part of speech, but where they do not stand at the end of the sentence they are also terminated by a conjunction or other particle.

220-221. Noun and adjective clauses are introduced by လာ and terminated by နှိ; e.g. အဘယျာ လာအမိကအဘယျာနှိ အလ, he does not know that his father will eat it. လံလှယမိကွာနှိ အိလှပွဲမိလိ, the book which my father wrote is on the table.

222. Some adverbial clauses are introduced by လာ or ထိ and terminated by a temporal particle, or by နှိ;  
e.g. လှလှအခါ ယအပျာနးကအလ, while I was going I saw nobody. အဘအဂံအိ ထိယဂံအိဘအနိလိ, his house is where my house is.

223. Conditional clauses are introduced by အ, which stands immediately after the subject, and are terminated by တ; e.g. ဆအဂဲဆတ နကဘမိလိ, if it rains you will get wet.

An apparent, but not a real, exception to this rule is found in the case of complex sentences, in which a subordinate noun clause will come before အ;

e.g. နလှအဘတ လှဘိ, if you can go, go by all means.

224. အ is occasionally used to introduce a concessive conditional clause ending in လိနာဂ, or လိနာ; e.g. ဆအဂဲဆလိနာဂ နကဘလှလိ, even though it rains you will have to go.

225. Clauses of purpose are introduced by ဘိ and when not standing at the end of the sentence are terminated by တ; ယထဲထဲလှလှ ဘိယကအမှလိ, I returned home that I might eat rice. ဘိနကအိဆိယထဲတ, နဘအိသံပွဲလိ, in order that you may recover, you must take medicine.

226. Negative clauses of purpose take the form of a prohibitory clause preceded by ဘဲာ်ဝိ, and terminated (when necessary) by တး; e.g. ဘဲာ်ဝိနထီးဆာလဂ္ဂးတး, နဘာအုခိးဘအံ့အု, in order that you may not get sick, you must not eat unripe mango.

227. Negative clauses of purpose are sometimes left without an introductory particle, and are terminated by ဘာ်ဝိ or ဘာ်ရှု; လုးဘူလးထံာ်ဖးနီလဂ္ဂး, နကလးထုးဘာ်ဝိလီ, do not go near the well, lest you fall into it.

228. Clauses of comparison are introduced by ဘဲာ် and terminated by အဝိနီ; e.g. ဘဲာ်အဖါမးဂုးအဝိနီ, အဖါမးဂုးဘဲာ်နီအဝိဆုလီ, as the father does, so does the son also. See [202](#).